

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 9 and 17-23 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 9 and 21 are amended, and claim 10 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 9 is amended to include the features of claim 10, and claim 21 is amended for dependency. No new matter is added by these amendments. Reconsideration based on the amendments and final remarks is respectfully requested.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants greatly appreciate the indication in the Office Action that claims 1-7, 17-20 and 22 are allowed and that claims 10 and 21 recite allowable subject matter. Applicants respectfully submit that Applicants' amendment to claim 9 incorporating the subject matter of claim 10 indicated as allowed, places claims 9 and 23 in condition for allowance. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance.

II. Claim Objection

The Office Action objects to claims 10 and 21 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Applicants respectfully submit that Applicants' amendment to claim 21 and cancellation of claim 10 obviate the objection. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

III. Claims Define Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 9 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Iizuka et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,981,604), or Valliencourt et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,341,946). The rejections are moot in view of the above amendments.

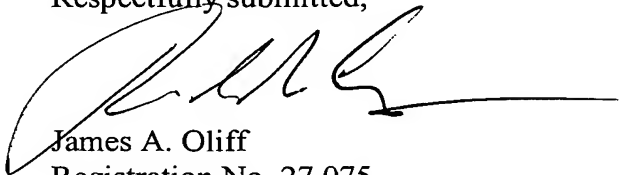
As indicated above, Applicants respectfully submit that Applicants' amendment to claim 9 incorporating the subject matter of claim 10 indicated as allowable, overcomes the rejection of independent claim 9 and claim 23 depending therefrom. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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